



FLOUR 101

As the [Home Baking Association](#) says, "Baking is an inexpensive family activity that provides opportunities to share baking traditions, recipes and family heritage!" Many of the flours listed can be found in the baking aisle of your favorite grocery store. Remember, soft, low protein wheats are used for cakes, pastries, cookies and crackers. Hard, high protein wheats make excellent breads!

BREAD FLOUR

White flour that is a blend of hard, high protein wheats and has greater gluten strength and protein content than all-purpose flour. Unbleached and in some cases conditioned with ascorbic acid, bread flour is milled primarily for commercial bakers, but is available at most grocery stores. Protein varies from 12-14 percent.

CAKE FLOUR

Fine-textured, silky flour milled from soft wheats with low protein content. It is used to make cakes, cookies, crackers, quick breads and some types of pastry. Cake flour has a greater percentage of starch and less protein, which keeps cakes and pastries tender and delicate. Protein varies from 7-9 percent.

WHITE FLOUR

The finely ground endosperm of the wheat kernel.

ALL-PURPOSE FLOUR

White flour milled from hard wheats or a blend of hard and soft wheats. It gives the best results for a variety of products, including some yeast breads, quick breads, cakes, cookies, pastries and noodles. All-purpose flour is usually enriched and may be bleached or unbleached. Bleaching will not affect nutrient value. Different brands will vary in performance. Protein content varies from 8-11 percent.

SELF-RISING FLOUR

Also referred to as phosphate flour, a convenience product made by adding salt and leavening to all-purpose flour. It is commonly used in biscuits and quick breads, but is not recommended for yeast breads. One cup of self-rising flour contains 1 ½ teaspoons baking powder and ½ teaspoon salt. Self-rising can be substituted for all-purpose flour by reducing salt and baking powder according to these proportions.

WHOLE WHEAT FLOUR

Can be used interchangeably and nutrient values differ minimally. Either grinding the whole-wheat kernel or recombining the white flour, germ and bran that have been separated during milling produces them. Their only differences may be in coarseness and protein content. Insoluble fiber content is higher than in white flours.

PASTRY FLOUR

Has properties intermediate between those of all-purpose and cake flours. It is usually milled from soft wheat for pastry-making, but can be used for cookies, cakes, crackers and similar products. It differs from hard wheat flour in that it has a finer texture and lighter consistency. Protein varies from 8-9 percent.

GLUTEN FLOUR

Usually milled from spring wheat and has a high protein (40-45 percent), low-starch content. It is used primarily for diabetic breads, or mixed with other non-wheat or low-protein wheat flours to produce a stronger dough structure. Gluten flour improves baking quality and produces high-protein gluten bread.